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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1858.

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THE LEEDS MUSICAL FESTIVAL.

(From Our own Correspondent.)

Sept. 10.

The fact that, despite modern inventions, time and space are not completely annihilated, obliged me to conclude my letter last week, without giving anything like a detailed account of the performance of Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, J. S. Bach's *Passions-Musik*, or Beethoven's *Mount of Olives*. I will now endeavour to supply the omission.

It is almost like informing your readers that two and two make four, to state that the *Stabat Mater* was excellently rendered by such accomplished artists as Mesdames Alboni, Clara Novello, Weiss, Signor Giuglini, and Mr. Santley. The orchestra and chorus, too, were well up to the mark, and the whole performance was a fine specimen of execution, both vocal and instrumental. The unaccompanied quartet, "Quando corpus," was especially worthy of commendation.

In the *Passions-Musik* of J. S. Bach, the palm must certainly be accorded to Mr. Sims Reeves. This gentleman was particularly happy in the grand scene for the tenor solo, with chorus, and air, "With Jesus will I watch and pray." Vocal skill, devotional feeling and a perfect comprehension of all the beauties distinguishing the venerable composer's work were combined with a degree of delicacy, unaffected purity, and an absence of anything like effort, which left nothing to be desired. I question very much whether this music was ever better, or, indeed, so well given. The audience were loud in their applause, despite all the recommendations, nearly approaching commands, issued by the committee for the observance of silence. The two chorales: "O Lord, who dares to smite Thee," "O Lord, Thy love's unbound'd," and the chorus, "In tears of grief we here repine," were wonderfully well given. Miss Dolby was very fine in the air, "See the Saviour's outstretched arm." The other artists engaged, namely, the Misses Freeman, Helena Walker, Messrs. Wilby Cooper and Hinchliffe, exerted themselves most ably to imitate the good example set them by the great stars I have mentioned.

The next piece was an organ sonata of his own composition, played by Mr. W. Spark. This not only displayed in the best light Mr. W. Spark's talents both as an instrumentalist and a composer, but fully settled all doubts as to the quality of the new organ, which is, in every respect, a magnificent instrument, worthy the designers, the builders, and the corporation of Leeds.

With regard to the performance of the *Mount of Olives*, I hardly know what to say. I have praised so much, that it appears something like exaggeration to affirm that Beethoven's sublime work was even better executed than the composition which preceded it, and that the artists surpassed their former efforts. And yet such is the truth; the plain unvarnished truth. The execution of the "Hallelujah" chorus, and the scene in the mountain, where the Saviour is pursued by the soldiers, was something to be heard, not described. All praise to Messrs. Sims Reeves, Weiss, Madame Clara Novello, the members of the chorus and band, and, though last, not least, to Professor Bennett, for so magnificent a realisation of the composer's conceptions.

The second miscellaneous concert took place yesterday evening. The hall was crowded to suffocation. I suppose it was in order that there might be enough for so large an audience that the programme was so long. However, here it is: judge for yourself:—

PART I.—Overture, Zauberflöte—Mozart; Song, La Calunnia, Sig. Vialetti—Rossini; Aria, Vedrai Carino, Mdlle. Piccolomini—Mozart; Choral glee, Come, bounteous May—Spofforth; Aria, Della sua pace, Signor Giuglini—Mozart; Scena, Infelice, Madame C. Novello—Mendelssohn; Caprice in E major, pianoforte (with orchestral accompaniments), Miss A. Goddard—W. S. Bennett; Cavatina, Naqui all'affano, Madame Alboni—Rossini; Trio, Pappatacci, Signors Giuglini, Rossi, and Vialetti—Rossini; Scena, Quando miro, Miss Dolby—Mozart; Symphony in A minor (Scotch)—Mendelssohn.

PART II.—Overture in D major—J. S. Bach; Song, Phœbe, dearest, Mr. Sims Reeves—Hatton; Duo, Lasciami non t'ascolto, Madame C. Novello and Madame Alboni—Rossini; Fantasia, pianoforte—Miss A. Goddard—Thalberg; Brindisi, Il segreto, Madame Alboni—Donizetti;

Song, Mr. Weiss—Shield; Duo, Quanto amore, Mdlle. Piccolomini and Signor Rossi—Donizetti; Aria, Non più andrai, Signor Vialetti—Mozart; Preghiera with chorus, Dal tuo stellato (Mose in Egitto), Mdlle. Piccolomini, Madame Alboni, Signor Giuglini, and Signor Vialetti—Rossini; Overture, Oberon—Weber.

Really, there ought to be inscribed on the walls of all music-halls the old saying, "Enough is as good as a feast." The audience, however, did not appear in the least tired, but applauded enthusiastically, and were profuse in encores.

Mademoiselle Piccolomini was encored in "Vedrai carino," Madame Alboni was encored in "Naqui all'affano;" and Mr. Sims Reeves was encored in "Phœbe, dearest." The glee: "Come bounteous May," was also considered worthy the same honour. Miss Arabella Goddard again astonished the Leedites; on this occasion by her performance of Professor Bennett's caprice in E major. I am perfectly aware to what kind of charge I am laying myself open, but I don't care. I say, boldly and fearlessly, that, last night, Miss Arabella Goddard played even better than usual. Truth is stronger than fiction, and that is the truth.

Sept. 11th.

The programme of yesterday morning's performance consisted of a selection from Haydn's *Seasons*, and of Handel's great master-piece, *Israel in Egypt*, and furnished another proof of the good taste of those who had the direction of the Festival. There is, however, no pleasing everybody, as the old man in the fable once found to his cost. The English always have been, are, and will be to the end of time, a nation of grumblers, and the people of Leeds are not a whit behind the rest of their countrymen in this respect. It speaks volumes, therefore, in favour of the arrangements made by the committee and their talented conductor that the number of grumblers has, on this occasion, been very small; yet there have been a few, and amongst those few I own I must be counted. From what I have previously written, the reader will have perceived I find no fault with the manner, generally speaking, in which the various works have been executed. On the contrary, I have sometimes been at a loss how to do justice to it. But what I object to is the order observed in the programmes of yesterday and Thursday, the 9th instant. On the last-named occasion, Rossini's *Stabat Mater* was placed before J. S. Bach's *Passions-Musik*, a wonderful example of miscalculation of effect; while, yesterday, Haydn's *Seasons* preceded Handel's *Israel in Egypt*, an arrangement equally open to objection. I may be considered hypercritical, but I am not the only person who entertains this opinion, and every real musician will at once perceive that it is well-grounded. I have already adverted to another objectionable feature in nearly all the programmes, and that is their great length. This is really a serious evil, which is on the increase, and which, I trust, the press will do its best to put down.

The execution of both works, the *Seasons* and *Israel in Egypt*, was magnificent. The principal solo singers in the former, were Mesdames Clara Novello, Weiss, Sunderland; Messrs. Sims Reeves, Wilby Cooper, Santley, and Weiss, who all performed the task allotted to them in the most conscientious and artistic manner. In the latter composition, we had the same artists, plus Miss Dolby, whose singing of the two airs, "The land brought forth frogs," and "Thou shalt bring them in," caused the audience—oh! how insatiable a monster is an audience—to regret she had not sung in the previous work, at least such was the gist of the observations made by that portion of the audience who sat in my immediate vicinity. "The Lord is a man of war," was highly effective in the hands, or, rather, from the lips, of Messrs. Santley and Weiss, while "The enemy said I will pursue," was equal to anything I ever heard from Mr. Sims Reeves. I must not omit in common justice to mention Miss Palmer, who, with Mr. Wilby Cooper, gave the duet, "Thou in thy mercy," in an exceedingly commendable manner. This young lady has made rapid progress in her profession lately, and, with study, bids fair some day to become a popular favourite. The chorus were deserving of especial praise, and afforded gratifying evidence of the general spread of a love for music in Yorkshire. The execution of the grand "Hailstone" chorus was unparalleled. It was something never to be for-

gotten, and elicited an encore that made the very roof vibrate again.

Between the first and second parts, Mr. Henry Smart extemporised on the organ with all the skill of an accomplished instrumentalist, and all the fancy of a truly poetic composer. His performance was a treat of a very high order, and was duly appreciated by the audience. The hall was crowded.

At the miscellaneous concert last night, we had Beethoven's symphony in C minor, Weber's *Concertstück* for pianoforte and orchestra, and Mendelssohn's overture of the *Isles of Fingal*, with the following vocal selection :—

Aria, "Miei Rampolli," Signor Rossi—Rossini; Aria, "Convier partir," Madlle. Piccolomini—Donizetti; Aria, "La mia canzone," Signor Giuglini—Bellini; Romanza, "Oh quanto vag," Madame Weiss—Spohr; Choral glee, "Awake, Æolian lyre"—Danby; Song, "The green trees whisper," Miss Dolby—Balfe; New song, "The beating of my own heart," Madame C. Novello—Macfarren; Duo, "Parigi o cara," Madlle. Piccolomini and Signor Giuglini—Verdi; Song, "Mad Tom," Mr. Weiss—Purcell.

This constituted Part I. In the way of instrumental music, Part II. comprised the overture to *Guillaume Tell*, Mr. Vincent Wallace's *fantasia* on *Robin Adair*, and the second part of Beethoven's septet in E flat, together with the following miscellaneous vocal trifles :—

Ballad, "Many a time and oft," Miss Dolby—Duggan; Aria, "Una furtiva lagrima," Signor Giuglini—Donizetti; Aria, "Batti, Batti," Madlle. Piccolomini—Mozart; Solo and chorus, "Come if you dare," Mr. Sims Reeves—Purcell; Recitative and aria, "Arminius," Miss Palmer—Handel; Duet, "Non fuggir," Mr. and Madame Weiss—Donizetti; Song, with Chorus, "Nazareth," Mr. Santley—Gounod; Song, "The Slave's Dream," Mr. Winn—Hatton; Duo, "Signorina in tanta fretta," Madlle. Piccolomini and Signor Rossi—Donizetti,—followed by—it is a fact, however incredible—Weber's *Jubilee Overture*.

The orchestra greatly distinguished itself in Beethoven's symphony, Mendelssohn's overture, and Weber's *Concertstück*, Miss Arabella Goddard taking the solo part. By this time, the audience had become acquainted with Miss Arabella Goddard, and, of course expected something wonderful, but in the above, as well as in Wallace's *fantasia*, she took them as much by surprise as though they had never heard her before. The septet, too, was grandly given by Mr. Blagrove (violin), Mr. Webb (viola), Mr. Williams (clarinet), Mr. Waetzig (bassoon), Mr. C. Harper (horn), Mr. Lucas (violoncello), and Mr. Severn (double bass). The latter gentleman replaced Mr. Howell, of the Philharmonic, who was prevented by indisposition from lending his valuable aid. The vocal selection went off smoothly, but there were no encores, with the exception of that accorded to Madlle. Piccolomini and Signor Giuglini, in the duet, "Parigi o cara," and that bestowed on the glee, "Awake, Æolian lyre," rendered with a freshness, a vigour, and a delivery which did the very highest credit to the singers of Yorkshire. The concert was not over till nearly twelve o'clock.

Sep. 12th.

The final performance took place yesterday, when Handel's *Messiah* was given, the principal singers being Mesdames Clara Novello, Weiss, Sunderland, Misses Dolby, Palmer, Helena Walker, Messrs. Sims Reeves, Weiss, Hinckliffe and Winn. The execution was splendid, and the audience enthusiastic, but properly enthusiastic. They were too delighted to spoil the continuity of the work by encores. The soprano air, "If God be with us," which is nearly always omitted, was admirably given by Mrs. Sunderland, who took, also, a prominent part in the National Anthem, with which the proceedings terminated. The audience then called for Professor Bennett, who was greeted with the warmest, and, I must add, most vociferous marks of approbation from all parts of the hall. Three cheers followed for that newly-belted knight, Sir Peter Fairbairn, the mayor, and the Festival was at an end. The receipts are said to amount, *en bloc*, to somewhere near £7,500, and, after deducting all expenses, it is expected some £2,000 will be handed over to the Leeds General Infirmary.

Thus, as the reader must perceive, the first Leeds Musical Festival has been a great triumph. May the next, this time three years, prove equally successful.

THE BIRMINGHAM MUSICAL FESTIVAL.

(From *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*.)

HAVING concluded our notices of the Hospital, we now come to the other branch of our subject—the history of those great Musical Celebrations which have from the earliest period been intimately associated with the Hospital, and have done so much to make the name of Birmingham famous throughout Europe as the cultivator and successful promoter of the musical art in its highest developments. When we peruse the records of the Birmingham Festivals, we seem to be reading the History of Music for three-quarters of a century. The noblest works in every branch of the art have been produced at the Festivals as soon as they were known, and sometimes even before they became known in the metropolis itself; nay more, of the most sublime of these masterpieces several have derived their being from the Birmingham Festival. And the Festival records, in like manner, are enriched by the name of every great artist, vocal or instrumental, who has appeared in England during the whole period of their duration. The history of these celebrations naturally divides itself into three periods—the performances given during the last century; those which took place in the period between the commencement of the present century and the opening of the Town Hall; and those which have been given since that event. Of these three periods we shall treat in as many successive articles, confining ourselves for the present to the Festival given during the last century.

Hitherto it has been generally supposed that the first musical performance in aid of the Hospital took place in 1778; but in reality what was actually the first Festival was held exactly ten years earlier than that date, namely, in September, 1768. In the Hospital minute-book for that year we find that at a board-meeting held on the 3rd of May it was resolved that "a Musical Entertainment should be established," and a committee was then appointed to conduct this important undertaking. We print the name of the committee for the same reason that we published those of the first Hospital Board—because a record of the persons who commenced a work which has attained such noble proportions, cannot be uninteresting to the community which now reaps the benefit of their far-seeing labours. The committee were—Mr. John Taylor, Mr. Isaac Spooner, Mr. John Taylor, jun., Dr. Ash, Dr. Small, Mr. Henry Carver, jun., and Mr. Brooke Smith.

So far as we know, every document connected with this Festival is lost, nor do the Hospital minute-books throw any light upon it, but from the files of our own journal for the year 1768, we are enabled to supply a copy of the programme, as follows :—

On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, the 7th, 8th, and 9th of September, the Oratorios of "L'Allegro," &c., "Alexander's Feast," and the "Messiah," will be performed here.

L'ALLEGRO, ED IL PENSERO SO,
Will be at the Theatre in King-street, on Wednesday Evening, the 7th inst.

And ALEXANDER'S FEAST,

On Thursday Evening, the 8th,

Between the several parts of which Mr. Pinto will play a Solo; and Concertos will be introduced by the other performers on their several instruments.

On Thursday Morning, will be performed in St. Philip's Church, at Ten o'Clock, Mr. Handel's grand "Te Deum" and "Jubilate," with an Anthem of Dr. Boyce's, suitable to the occasion, and Mr. Handel's celebrated "Coronation Anthem;"

And the MESSIAH, or Sacred Oratorio,

At the same place, on Friday Morning the 9th.

On the Wednesday and Thursday Evenings, after the Oratorios, will be a Ball, at Mrs. Sawyer's in the square.

The principal vocal parts will be performed by Mrs. Pinto, Mr. Norris, Mr. Matthews, Mr. Price, &c. Instrumental by Messrs. Pinto, Millar, Adecock, Jenkins, Parke, Lates, Hobes, Clark, Chew, &c., &c.

The Oratorios will be conducted by Mr. Capel Bond, of Coventry. The music at the church on Thursday morning is to be opened with a trumpet concerto by Mr. Bond.

It is further announced that "the streets will be lighted from the play-house to the ball-room." The performances, we learn,

were attended by "brilliant and crowded audiences," and on the Thursday the Countesses of Dartmouth and Aylesford "very obligingly stood to receive at the church door" contributions for the benefit of the charity. The produce of the entertainments amounted to £800, of which the committee were enabled to pay over £299 7s. 4d. to the Hospital funds—a very humble beginning when compared with the magnificent returns of our later Festivals.

From another point the comparison is more favourable—as regards the quality of the music. It is very gratifying to observe that from the very first our Festivals have been marked by the selection of music of the highest class. Notwithstanding that even at the remote period of which we are writing, Birmingham was decidedly a musical town, it still must have been a bold experiment to have offered to the public a series of musical performances, including the *Messiah* and other works, then scarcely appreciated by persons of cultivated taste; and certainly distasteful to many, if not to most, of the amateurs who had acquired a relish for the inferior and frivolous music against the popularity of which Handel found it so difficult to contend. The names of the performers above mentioned are now nearly, if not quite, forgotten, and it may therefore be interesting to remark that at least some of them were artists of note in their day. For example: the principal instrumentalist, Mr. Pinto, was a famous violinist, and was for several years leader of the band at Drury Lane Theatre. The principal vocalist, Mrs. Pinto, his wife, under her maiden name (Brent) was a celebrated singer, and a favourite pupil of Dr. Arne, who wrote expressly for her the part of Mandane, in *Artaxerxes*. Mr. Norris, the chief male vocalist, was a Bachelor of Music, settled at Oxford, and well-known both there and in the metropolis. According to a biographical notice, he was "honoured with the particular approbation" both of George III. and Queen Charlotte. Norris's name is connected with the Birmingham Festival by the melancholy circumstances of his death. Although in a feeble state of health, he insisted on fulfilling an engagement to appear at the Festival of 1790, but in his exhausted condition the effort proved too severe, and ten days after the Festival he died at Lord Dudley's seat at Himley, whether he had been taken in the hope that change of air might lead to the restoration of his health.

The next Festival took place in 1778, the year before the Hospital was opened, and when it stood greatly in need of an increase of its funds. At the same period the building of St. Paul's Chapel was about to be commenced, and the committee of the chapel requested the Hospital board to unite with them in "giving an oratorio" for the joint benefit of the chapel and the Hospital. The proposal was agreed to by the board, and the performance fixed for the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of September in the same year. Musical entertainments seem always to have been very popular in Birmingham and its neighbourhood. As far back as 1741 concerts were occasionally given in the town, and at the date of which we are now writing, they were established amongst the regular amusements. Side by side with the advertisements of the Festival we find announcements of other concerts, amongst which may be mentioned "a concert of vocal and instrumental music, the vocal parts by Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Carleton, J. Taylor, and others. The instrumental by a select band. First violin, Mr. Alcock." This concert was given for the benefit of the waiters at Vauxhall Gardens, and the tickets were sold at the very moderate price of one shilling. At Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in the same week, there was a "music meeting," at which the *Messiah* and the Masque of *Acis and Galatea* were performed, the oratorio tickets being 3s. 6d. each, and those for the concert and ball 2s. 6d. A similar concert at which the *Messiah* was given had recently taken place at Dudley. At that time Birmingham actually possessed what we may venture to call an Opera House, besides two theatres—one in King-street, and the other in New-street. The operatic performances were given in a wooden playhouse erected on the Moseley-road, and in the homely language of our ancestors called "a Concert Booth." Unluckily some malicious person set the booth on fire, and it was completely burnt down, its destruction involving also that of all the scenery, together with most part of the company's

dresses and other decorations. A writer, who signs himself "No Player," addressing "The Printers of the *Birmingham Gazette*," pathetically describes the straits to which the unfortunate company were reduced.

"The situation of the actors was indeed deplorable; after having taken infinite pains during the three last months—after having done all in their power to alleviate the distresses of some individuals in this town, by giving them benefits, while the miserable pittance allowed to themselves afforded them only a bare subsistence;—just as they were in expectation of the approach of their own benefits, when they might have shared a few guineas, to discharge their unavoidable debts;—at such a critical juncture, to have their fond hopes blasted at once, by a calamity as shocking as the authors of it were wicked, must deeply affect every mind not totally lost to every humane feeling."

The poor singers thus burnt out appealed to the generosity of their professional brethren, and the proprietors of the New-street Theatre gave them the use of that building, where on the 19th of August, 1778, they performed Sheridan's opera of *The Duenna*, which had been played five times previously at the Concert Booth. The entertainment (which also included the farce of *All the World's a Stage*), appears to have been highly successful, the writer above quoted remarking that "the two plays were represented with uncommon applause, but whether the violent claps which shook the house proceeded from a sense of the performers' merit, or compassion for their distress, is difficult to determine; but probably each of these motives had its share in producing the effect." The proprietors of the King-street Theatre, not to be behind-hand with the lessee of the New-street house, gave a benefit in the following week, on behalf of Mr. Godso, "the builder and sole proprietor of the Moseley Theatre," of whom it is said in the advertisement that his loss "is to him immense, and unless he is honoured with the kind countenance of his friends, will be irreparable." This digression from our main subject, if it serve no other purpose, will at least show that Birmingham was so well supplied with musical amusements as to require that the conductors of the Festival should of necessity take a high tone in selecting the compositions for their meeting, and that to render the performances attractive they should engage the best available vocalists and instrumentalists. Accordingly we find that the following creditable programme was drawn up:—

On Wednesday morning next, the 3rd of September, at St. Philip's Church, will be performed, in the course of the service (which will begin at half-past ten precisely) the overture of "Esther;" Handel's grand "Dettingen to Deum" and "Jubilate," an Organ Concerto by Mr. Harris; Dr. Boyce's "Anthem;" the "Old Hundredth" Psalm accompanied; and, after a Sermon to be preached by the Rev. Mr. Young, Handel's grand "Coronation Anthem." In the evening, at the theatre, in New-street, A Grand Miscellaneous Concert, consisting of select vocal and instrumental pieces, by the principal performers.

On Thursday morning the 3rd, at St. Philip's, the oratorio of "Judas Maccabeus," and between the acts an Organ Concerto by Mr. Clark. In the evening at the Theatre, the serenata of "Acis and Galatea;" between the parts of which will be introduced some favourite pieces, and an "Ode to May," composed by Mr. Harris.

On Friday morning the 4th, at St. Philip's, the sacred oratorio of "Messiah." In the evening at the Theatre, a Grand Miscellaneous Concert, consisting of several capital pieces, by the principal performers.

Principal vocal performers, Miss Mahon, Miss Salmon, Messrs. Norris, Matthews, Price, Salmon, &c., &c.

Principal instrumental performers, Mr. Cramer (first violin at the Opera House, London), Messrs. Cervetto, Park, Ashley, Storacci, Jenkins, Mahon, &c., &c. The other parts of the band, which will be very full, by the most approved performers, and the celebrated Women Chorus Singers from Lancashire.

N.B.—There will be a Ball each evening at the Hotel.

This Festival produced nearly £800, of which £170 fell to the share of the Hospital. In March, 1784, at a meeting of the Hospital Board, it was resolved "That some Musical performances be thought of, for the benefit of the charity, to take place after the meeting of the Three Choirs in Autumn." In accordance with this resolution, the Musical Committee, reinforced by new members, once more entered on their labours, and were fortunate enough to enlist the co-operation of Viscount Dudley and Ward, who

consented to act as steward, an office which seems to have then involved the selection of the music, the engagement of the principal vocalists, and, in fact, the general direction of the Festival. In consequence of music meetings at Gloucester, Salisbury, and Liverpool, much difficulty was experienced in choosing a proper time for the Birmingham meeting, but ultimately the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th of September were fixed upon, and preparations for ensuring its success were commenced. From the minute-book of the Festival Committee, we learn that Lord Dudley offered to place at the committee's disposal, for performance at the meeting, a new oratorio entitled *Goliath*, composed by Mr. Attenbury, a well-known writer of part-songs. On the recommendation of so influential a patron the oratorio was accepted; and Mr. Attenbury, in addition, handsomely devoted to the Hospital the profits arising from the sale of the work.

The programme was more varied than usual, and the Festival derived additional interest from being made a Commemoration of Handel. The first day's performance, at St. Philip's Church, comprised the Occasional Overture, Purcell's *Te Deum* and *Jubilate*, Handel's anthem, "O, come let us sing," and Handel's "Coronation Anthem." On Wednesday evening, at the New-street Theatre, the Miscellaneous Concert included "the favourite pieces performed at the Pantheon, by command of His Majesty, in commemoration of Mr. Handel." On Thursday morning, at the church, the service consisted entirely of Handel's works, the selection being the same as that "commanded by His Majesty, in Westminster Abbey, on Thursday, the 3rd of June, in commemoration of Mr. Handel." Amongst the pieces were the Dettingen *Te Deum*, the Overtures to *Esther* and *Tamerlane*, the Dead March in *Saul*, several anthems, and the double chorus from *Israel in Egypt*—"The Lord shall reign." On Thursday evening, at the theatre, the usual concert was made to give place to Mr. Attenbury's Oratorio of *Goliath*; and on Friday St. Philip's again resounded to the sublime beauties of the ever-glorious *Messiah*. The Festival concluded by a miscellaneous concert at the theatre, "consisting of select pieces, by the most capital Performers." The principal vocalists were the Misses Abrams and Master Bartleman; and the chief instrumentalists were Messrs. Wilson, Ashley, Gariboldi, and Clarke. The chorus and band are described as being very full and complete, and the latter was supported by the large double drums which were used in Westminster Abbey. The attendance at this Festival was more numerous than on any former occasion, and the newspaper of the day records the gratifying circumstance that the local nobility and gentry began to take increased interest in the celebrations. Amongst the persons specially mentioned as present, and to whom the Charity was "greatly indebted," were Lord and Lady Plymouth, Lord and Lady Ferrers, Lady Windsor, Sir Robert and Lady Lawley, Sir Edward Littleton, and others. The gross produce of the Festival was £1,325, and the profits £703.

The successful issue of preceding Festivals, and the growing importance of these meetings, encouraged the Committee to greater efforts in 1787, the date of the next celebration. At this period also, the local clergy began to take a warm interest in the Festivals, the Rev. Charles Curtis, Rector of St. Martin's, the Rev. T. Young of St. Paul's, and the Rev. J. Darwall, of St. John's, Deritend, having been added to the Committee, every meeting of which they attended, Mr. Curtis generally occupying the chair. The Rev. Spencer Madan, although not placed upon the committee, rendered the Festival essential help, by making the necessary arrangements for the musical performances in his church, and by preaching the usual sermon on the opening day. The connection of the Festival with the nobility and gentry of the district was also strengthened by the election of the Earl of Aylesford as President, and the Earl of Plymouth, Viscount Dudley and Ward, and Sir George Shuckburgh, Bart., as Stewards. The Festival commenced on Wednesday, August 22nd, in St. Philip's Church, with a morning service, in the course of which was performed a selection from the works of Handel, Purcell, and Boyce. On Thursday morning, for the first time in Birmingham, the oratorio of *Israel in Egypt* was performed, and on Friday the *Messiah*. Each evening there was a concert at the theatre, the programme containing

selections from the works of Handel, Wilbye, Purcell, Corelli, and Gluck, sacred and profane music being very oddly mingled together. The celebrated Mrs. Billington, then at the commencement of her brilliant career, made her first appearance at this Festival, and enchanted all hearers by her extraordinary ability and the singular gracefulness of her style. To borrow the words of a contemporary record, she sang "with the most powerful sensibility, and failed not to excite usual admiration." So great, indeed, was the impression she created by her singing in the *Messiah*, that the public demanded a second performance of that oratorio, which was accordingly repeated on the Saturday, to an overflowing audience. The gross receipts of the Festival amounted to very nearly £2,000, and yielded to the Hospital a profit of £964.

We must not omit to mention an amusing quarrel which occurred between the committee and Mr. Yates, the manager of the theatre. The dispute is gravely recorded at full length in the Festival minute-book, from which we gather the following narrative. Mr. Yates, who considered that sufficient remuneration was not offered to him for the use of the theatre, announced a performance for the Tuesday evening, although the theatre was indispensably required for a rehearsal. Notwithstanding remonstrance, Mr. Yates persisted in his determination, and the committee commenced active measures of coercion, and threatened to take legal proceedings to close the theatre for the remainder of the season. This seems to have brought the manager to his senses, and he agreed to forego the Tuesday's performance; but some fresh cause of offence having arisen, he again announced his intention to open on the Tuesday. A committee meeting was consequently held on the 16th of August, only a week before the Festival, and a deputation of five persons was sent to the recalcitrant manager to persuade him "to give up the idea of playing." After the lapse of some time, the deputation returned, and reported that the committee's terms were agreed to. All now seemed now plain sailing; but unhappily Mr. Yates once more changed his mind, and before the committee broke up, a messenger from him announced a demand for compensation, coupled with a threat that if not liberally dealt with he would play after all, not only on the Tuesday, but on the Friday also. The matter was regarded as too important to be decided at that sitting, and another meeting was convened for the following morning, when a letter was sent to Mr. Yates demanding a final answer. The reply was what the minutes call "a verbal message," importuning that Mr. Yates would do as he pleased; whereupon the committee, now fairly enraged, sent word back that they should have no occasion for his theatre at all, and that it was their determination to prevent his theatrical performances immediately.

Accordingly Mr. Swann's amphitheatre, in Livery-street (afterwards a dissenting chapel), was engaged for the Evening Concerts; notice was given to Mr. Yates's actors that they would be prosecuted, if they "should attempt to speak on the stage hereafter under Mr. Yates's management," and persons were hired to attend at the theatre in order to have proofs against those of the performers who should venture on playing. In these determined steps Mr. Yates shrewdly foresaw his ruin, and prudently digesting the affronts under which he smarted, he sent a humble apology, and offered the use of the theatre for the whole week. This act of submission took place on Sunday, the 19th, but it was considered important enough to justify the summoning of a meeting on that day, when (the whole of the clerical members being present), it was resolved to accept Mr. Yates's offer, but as a punishment for his obstinacy it was also determined that not one farthing should be paid to him for the use of either theatre or orchestra. Thus ended a dispute which at one period threatened seriously to interfere with the success of the Festival of 1787.

The next Festival, which took place on the 25th, 26th, and 27th of August, 1790, was signalled by the appearance of Madame Mara, the famous rival of Mrs. Billington, and one of the most remarkable amongst the many eminent vocalists whose names adorn the annals of art in this country. This lady, who died so lately as 1833, acquired her great reputation in Germany and France, and afterwards in Italy, which she did not visit until she

had for some years been established as a vocalist of high reputation. She came to England in 1784, with her husband, a violin-player of some note, and speedily acquired the patronage of Lord Dudley, by whom she was much esteemed, and at whose house at Himley she was visiting prior to her engagement at the Birmingham Festival. Her appearance here seems, indeed, to have been owing to Lord Dudley, who probably defrayed the expenses of her engagement, as the committee return his Lordship a special vote of thanks "for his generous offer of the services of Mad. Mara and her husband." The other lady vocalists were Miss Mahon and the Misses Abrams. No oratorio besides the *Messiah* was performed at this meeting, the remainder of the music, both at the church and at the evening concerts in the theatre, being a selection from the works of English and Italian composers, but chiefly from Handel, whose masterpieces from the commencement steadily retained their hold on the public mind. Amongst the instrumental performers was Mr. Charles Knyvett, the brother of the better-known William Knyvett, who afterwards became the conductor of the festivals, and whose services we shall have occasion to refer to in a future article. This Festival produced £1,965 16s., of which £958 14s. were paid to the treasurers of the Hospital.

The year 1793, when the next Festival should have been held, commenced ominously for the success of any such performances. Trade was bad, the nation was suffering heavily under the pressure of severe taxation, and the public mind was directed rather towards the stern horrors of war than attuned to the cultivation of the harmonic art. In addition to national difficulties, a local misfortune—the destruction of the theatre by fire—had deprived the committee of any suitable place for the evening concerts. Under these disastrous circumstances it was resolved that the Festival should be delayed for one year, but the postponement actually extended to three years, and it was not until 1796 that the committee were able to announce another Festival. Madame Mara was again the principal vocalist, supported by Mrs. Second, the Misses Fletcher, and Messrs. Nield, Kelly, and Bartleman, who was then just entering on his eminent professional course. Amongst the instrumentalists were the three famous Lindleys, Robert, John, and Charles, and the equally celebrated J. B. Cramer. The selection of music was not marked by any special feature. The *Messiah* was again the sole oratorio, and the evening concerts are described as being composed of "the most favourite airs, duets, trios, catches, glees, and choruses; together with solos, quartettos, overtures, and concertos, by the first masters. The steward for the meeting (or the director, as he was then called) was the Earl of Aylesford. The Festival produced £2,043 18s., the profit on which amounted to £897. We are sorry to record the circumstance that the town was infested with numerous pickpockets, who came down specially for the music meetings, and of whose depredations the newspapers of the day make serious complaints. To effect their fraudulent designs the thieves made use of an ingenious device. Shoe-buckles were then going out of use amongst fashionable people, in favour of shoe-strings, and Birmingham being the great manufactory of buckles, the wearers of strings were decidedly unpopular. Taking advantage of the local feeling, the thieves hustled the wearers of shoe-strings, denounced them as unpatriotic despisers of fine old English customs, and in the tumult which naturally ensued contrived to reap a good harvest.

In anticipation of the next Festival, held in 1799, great efforts were made to enlist the support of the principal residents in the county as well as those of the town. The Earl of Warwick undertook the onerous post of director, and the list of patrons was enlarged by the addition of the names of Lords Hertford, Dartmouth, Aylesford, Dudley, Willoughby de Broke, Craven, Middleton, Brooke, and other persons occupying a high social position. The result of these measures was that the attendance of country gentlemen was materially increased, and the interests of the Hospital greatly promoted. By strengthening the band and chorus, as well as by engaging a larger number of principal performers, the committee laid the foundation of that eminence which the Festivals have since attained, and thus judiciously paved the way for that new and greater epoch which commenced with the advent of the present century. As regards the music,

the *Messiah* was still the chief attraction, the rest of the programme consisting of selections from Handel, Corelli, Geminiani, and other composers. For a third time Madame Mara worthily occupied the position of principal vocalist, her chief assistants being Miss Poole, Messrs. Harrison, William Knyvett, and Bartleman. Amongst the instrumentalists were the Lindleys, Holmes, Cantelo, Erskine, the Leanders, and others, with Cramer as leader of the band, and Harris as the organist. The exertions of the committee resulted in a considerable increase of the returns as compared with those of the preceding Festival, the gross sum now realised being £2,550, yielding a profit of £1,470. We may mention that, for the special benefit of the light-fingered gentry, the task of preserving order was entrusted to "The Loyal Birmingham Association of Infantry," who, notwithstanding very bad weather, manfully remained at their posts from morning until after midnight, effectually preserved order, and protected the pockets of those of His Majesty's subjects who came to attend the Festival.

(To be continued).

A REAL DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT.—We believe there is but one case in America of a real incident which somewhat approximates to that of Marie in the opera by Donizetti. This is in New York, where the National Guard (one thousand strong) have a fair orphan *protégé*, familiarly designated as "The Daughter of the Regiment." The National Guard, under Colonel Duryea, is the best regulated and appointed militia company in the United States. In drill, *esprit de corps*, organisation, and general appearance, it will bear close comparison with the "regulars" even of the modern military government. Some years ago an officer of the New York National Guard committed suicide. This act, according to military discipline, is considered one of cowardice, but the deceased was well known to be one who, in active service, stood amidst the bravest of the brave. He had been through the Mexican war, and stood high in esteem as a soldier; but other matters, when quietly at home, prompted him to become a suicide. He left an orphan child—a bright and promising little daughter. She was alone in the world, and, as it were, friendless. The regiment of her father adopted her, and she became thus a "Child of the Regiment," and that regiment the gallant National Guard of New York. A tax of two dollars per annum was levied on each member for the orphan's support and education. This amounted to 2,000 dollars a-year, and what was not expended was duly put away in investment for a dowry for "The Daughter of the Regiment." The young lady, now about sixteen years old, has grown up beautiful, intelligent, and accomplished, and is well off; and doubtless she looks upon her gallant guardians with all the love, honour, and enthusiasm that Marie did on the brave Sulpice and the gallant 21st in the opera. Such companies as the New York National Guard reflect honour on the country.—*Savannah Daily Georgian*.

HOW CERTAIN OPERAS CAME TO BE COMPOSED.—At the time when Auber (younger than he is now) reigned almost supreme at the Grand-Open, Mdlle. X— was the principal *danseuse*, the bright, particular sun, around which moved vocalists, composers, critics, &c., &c., as if living in the light of her smiles. Auber also was found among her devotees, but the charming *danseuse*, despite his attentions, treated him with the most marked coolness. One evening, behind the scenes, he became more urgent and pressing than ever for her favour, and she replied, "If ever you compose an opera, in which *I* fill the first *rôle*, I shall then begin to consider whether so insignificant a person as I am may be worthy the love of a great composer." Surely this was "giving the sack" in the best possible style. At least so thought the lady, for to her it seemed an impossibility that a *danseuse* could have the *first rôle* in an opera. But nothing seemed impossible to love and Auber. The next work produced by him was *Le Dieu et Bayadère*, and Mdlle. X— danced the Bayadère. Whether she afterwards listened to the devoted composer's vows, we cannot say, but this is certain, that he wrote another opera, *La Muette de Portici* (*Masaniello*) in which she appeared as Fenella.—*New York Dispatch*.

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.—Under the Management of Miss Louisa Pyne and Mr. W. Harrison.—On Monday, September 29th, and during the week, Her Majesty's servants will perform Balfe's opera, THE ROSE OF CASTILLE. Principal characters by Miss Louisa Pyne, Miss Susan Pyne, Miss M. Prescott; Mr. F. Glover, Mr. A. St. Albyn, Mr. George Honey, Mr. Bartholemew, and Mr. W. Harrison. Conductor, Mr. Alfred Mellon. To conclude with a grand Ballet Divertissement by Miles, Zilia Michelot, Pasquale, and Morlaechi, with a numerous corps de ballet. The band of fifty performers, and the chorus of forty voices, selected from the Royal Italian Opera. Acting-managers, Mr. William Brough and Mr. Edward Murray; Stage-manager, Mr. E. Stirling. Doors open at seven, commence at half-past. Stalls, 6s.; Dress Circle, 5s.; First ditto, 3s.; Upper Boxes, 1s. 6d.; Pit, 2s.; Gallery, 1s.; Upper ditto, 6d.; Private Boxes, £5 5s., £4 4s., £3 3s., £2 2s., £1 1s., 6d., £1 1s., and (for two persons), 10s. 6d. Box-office open daily from eleven to five, under the direction of Mr. E. Chatterton.

ROYAL PRINCESS'S THEATRE.

UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF MR. CHARLES KEAN.

MR. CHARLES KEAN'S FAREWELL SEASON, as MANAGER of the ROYAL PRINCESS'S THEATRE, will commence on Saturday, the 2nd October next, and conclude on Saturday the 30th JUly.

GREAT NATIONAL STANDARD THEATRE SHOREDITCH.—Proprietor, Mr. JOHN DOUGLASS.

The event of the season, the annual visit of Mr. SIMS REEVES, for twelve nights only, supported by first-rate operatic artists, full Chorus, and the whole of the Band of the Princess's Theatre. Conductor, Mr. Isaacson. On Monday and during the week, Saturday excepted, to commence with the opera of GUY MANNERING: Harry Bertram, with the songs of "Be mine, dear maid," "The Echo Duet," "My Pretty Jane," and "The Death of Nelson." Mr. Sims Reeves; Julius Mannerling, Miss Fanny Ternan; Lucy, Miss Lavine; Gabriel, Mr. Charles Bernard. To conclude with a popular Burletta. On Saturday next, a Grand Opera. The Theatre re-decorated. New Centre Chandelier on this occasion.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. G.—We will give the list next week.

AN OLD READER is informed that a gentleman connected with the paper would like to procure some of the numbers of '46 and the whole of '45. Correspondent is requested to state his terms.

CLEMENCE is politely answered with a negative to both her questions.

JURA.—Mr. Frank Mori's address is Somerset-street, Portman-square. Apply for the number, which we have forgotten, at Cramer, Beale and Co.'s, Regent-street. The two other questions we cannot reply to at present.

A. W. H.—A detailed description of the organ alluded to will be accepted with thanks.

THE MUSICAL WORLD.

LONDON, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18TH, 1858.

NEVER, perhaps, was musical criticism in this country at so low an ebb as at the present moment. With the exception of two or three of the leading journals, the articles which proceed from the metropolitan press would reflect discredit on the smallest newspaper in the smallest provincial town in the three kingdoms. Not only do the notices of music betray no acquaintance whatsoever with the art, but they almost invariably betoken an ignorance of the commonest rules of plain writing, to say nothing of style, manner, diction, and logic. Since music is now making such rapid strides in England, and its study has become almost universal, it must not be supposed that writers cannot be found conversant with the subject, who are ready and willing to undertake the office of the critic. Is it not more likely that the proprietors of journals, through ignorance, or blindness from prejudice, or not being able to understand or appreciate the power and significance of music, should err, or be careless in the selection of those whom they would appoint to fill the special department of their paper devoted to the art? It

has been said—When a man has a high voice, he is a tenor; when he has a low voice, he is a bass; when he has no voice, he is a barytone. In this manner the proprietors and managers of newspapers, anxious to oblige a friend, or provide for a *protégé*, seem to reconcile, or think they may reconcile, their predetermination. If a man, they argue, be well read in the English language and know everything, he may be enrolled among the writers of leaders; if he be a scholar and well versed in dramatic literature, he may qualify himself for the post of theatrical critic; if he know nothing, he will do very well to write about music. That such is too frequently the case, few will be inclined to disbelieve who have perused the strictures on operas and musical entertainments which have lately appeared in various London journals. While every other article has been, to say the least of it, respectably written, the notice of music has exhibited an amount of ignorance absolutely incredible, a defiance of reasoning which would put to shame Sancho Panza or Dogberry, and an abnegation of all the graces of style hardly pardonable in the loosest and roughest penny-a-liner. Why newspaper proprietors should be so particular in the choice of their dramatic scribe, and careless about their musical critic, can only be attributed to what we have just stated—ignorance or wilful blindness. And yet their own interests might indicate to them the greater importance of musical notices in a journal, the predominance, in point of number as well as interest, of operatic entertainments over dramatic, and the more special qualifications demanded for the musical writer.

The above reflections have been called forth by two letters which were transmitted to us from different quarters, calling our attention to two articles written about music in two different papers. Our first letter, from a correspondent signing himself "H. B. V.", inclosed an article on the Birmingham Festival, from the "Own Correspondent" of the *Daily Telegraph*, suggesting that, as we had been lately "criticising the critics," it would furnish excellent matter for our animadversion. As the fine-art articles of the morning contemporary in question have been almost invariably distinguished for their clearness and good sense, if not particularly characterised by critical acumen or profundity, we were somewhat astonished at the "perfunctoriness" exhibited in the notice sent us, and can only account for it by supposing that some "new hand" had been tried for the occasion, who, having never written about art at all, was considered qualified to criticise musical performances. We are sorry our space precludes us from furnishing the article *in extenso*, since a more exquisite specimen of "perfunctory" our columns have not yet supplied. We will, however, give two or three extracts, from which the reader may form no rude idea of the glorious whole, and refer him for the entire article to the *Daily Telegraph* of Thursday, in the Birmingham Festival week. Let it be premised that the notice is a series of inconsequencies, from which ratiocination is as stringently excluded as style or grammar. "We have seldom, however," writes the critic, "seen more enthusiasm excited in a concert-room than was produced by Madame Alboni in the ever-pleasing cabaletta, 'In questo semplice.' It has been said (*per quem?*) that the great contralto has seen her best days. There was no evidences of failure last night. She was as *gifted* and *versatile* in her intonation and expression, and as brilliant in her execution, as ever." That versatility in intonation is a quality to be praised, we learn for the first time, and that Alboni's intonation should vary

and in the varying excite no feeling but that of pleasure in the audience, will astonish our readers no less than ourselves. "A rather tame trio from one of Mozart's compositions," it appears, according to our novel-gifted scribe, "sung by Madame Castellan, Madame Alboni, and Mr. Weiss, did not produce much effect;" and of Madlle. Victoire Balfe, we are informed that "the favourable impression of the merits of the young vocalist, which the Birmingham people has, from report, formed, was amply confirmed as she sung the very elaborate aria, 'Il soave e bel contento,'" (*Niobe*). We must, at all risks, find room for as much of the affirmations on *Acis* and *Galatea* and *Eli*, as we can possibly insert:—

"The overture from the *Siege of Corinth*, a magnificent piece of instrumentation, which concluded the miscellaneous concert, was succeeded by Handel's cantata, *Acis and Galatea*, with additional accompaniments, composed expressly for the Festival by Costa. This composition is worthy of a place in any programme. The cantata finishes with a sweet pastoral chorus, telling Galatea to dry her tears, and describing the happiness which Acis now enjoys. The music throughout is exceedingly good and very pleasing, and the performance of last night cannot fail to bring it into more general notice, and secure for it some of the appreciation it so richly deserves."

Higher up we are told that the air, "'Love sounds the alarm,' is in Reeves's hands, worthy of Handel's fame," and that "it is one of the most telling pieces in the whole of the Festival programme."

The correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* is still more decided in his opinions about Mr. Costa's oratorio, and, if possible, still more "perfunctory" in his remarks:—

"*Eli* was written by Costa for the Birmingham Festival of 1855. It contains many fine points, and although not equal to *Elijah*, or to Handel's music, there are in it some passages which will be handed down to posterity. We allude particularly to the 'War-song' and chorus, the 'Evening prayer,' the chorus 'No evil shall befall thee,' the 'March,' and several other pieces, which will exist as long as music hath charms. The general effect of *Eli* is heavy, and some of the choruses are very difficult without being effective. The oratorio to-day went very smoothly. There were four re-demands accorded to what are decidedly the finest passages in the composition. The 'War-song' is one of the boldest martial pieces ever penned, and will last as long as there is a great tenor to sing it. It was superbly given by Mr. Sims Reeves, and most enthusiastically re-demanded. The quartet is one of the finest specimens of part-singing to which we ever listened. The 'March' has already become a favourite with every band of note in England. It was a superb piece of instrumentation. In the introductory portion of the oratorio there is a chorus and chant, in the cathedral style, in which Signor Belletti made a most effective appearance. Succeeding the duet is an extraordinary double chorus; the women—sopranos and altos—are enjoying the ungodly revel, while the priests—tenors and basses—are denouncing judgment upon them. It was powerfully and accurately sung. Signor Belletti did not acquire much credit in the heavy and unprofitable air, 'If thou shouldst mark,' although he sung it appropriately enough. The great soprano song of the work, 'I will extol Thee,' was given with great gusto by Madame Novello, of course. The first part concludes with a fine elaborate chorus, the recitations to which were well declaimed by Mr. Weiss and Signor Belletti. The quartet and 'March' are followed by a grand fugue chorus, very skilful, yet very unprofitable, and very well sung. The choral 'March'—which is the previous 'March' repeated in chorus—has a very fine effect. Perhaps, however, the gem of the whole work is the air, 'This night I left.' Madame Viardot rendered it in a most charming manner. Why was it not re-demanded? Its effect on the audience was most palpable. The composition, in point of merit, falls short towards the conclusion, the final choruses being the most awkward and inharmonious we have heard—exceedingly difficult, very noisy, and very unprofitable."

After wading through the above "perfunctoriana," our readers may peradventure exclaim, "These are most unprofitable morsels, and hardly worth the perusal." Nevertheless, we take leave to insert them as corroborative of our preliminary observations, and as tending to show that there

is something rotten in the state of music, and to point out the whereabouts of the rottenness. Had we time and room we might be further induced to call attention to the notices on the Birmingham Festival which appeared in the pages of a morning contemporary of longer standing, loftier position, greater prestige and influence, and higher price than the *Daily Telegraph*—the *Morning Herald*—not a whit less "perfunctory" than what we have quoted. At present, however, we shall content ourselves with the inclosure, number two, which was sent us this week, and which it will be seen, reflects as severely on provincial criticism as the *excerpta* given above does on our own metropolitan:—

"What could be finer than the natural gifts brought to Tuesday night's entertainment?" writes the *Shields Gazette*, apropos of the singing at the opening of the Mechanics' Institute at North Shields. "The powerful mellow organ-like tones of Miss Masterton; the dramatic force and liquid melody of Miss Redpath; the tender sweetness and soft grace of Mrs. Bewick; or the natural beauty and bird-like cadences of Mrs. Pinkney and Mrs. Carry; whilst among the male voices, there are few English singers that could have brought out more clearly the feeling and pathos of Mr. Haswell's delightful hymn than Mr. Flynn, whose noble voice seemed to ripen and mellow with the feeling that suffused the whole performance. Mr. Deakers equally supported his reputation by his delightful rendering of 'Beautiful Spring,' while Mr. Barker and Mr. Hindhaugh were equally excellent. In their sea and buffo songs, we cannot help thinking that if those ladies and gentlemen will continue to sing together, in a short time they will be able to give an entertainment that would bear no comparison with any concert-room in the kingdom."

Whether the article extracted from the London journal or that from the north-country *Gazette* be most "perfunctory," we leave to the reader to determine. Our sole desire and aim is to inculcate on proprietors, managers, directors and editors of newspapers, that the talents and accomplishments required for the office of musical writer are as many and as great as those demanded for the dramatic. To criticise an opera or an oratorio is not less difficult than to criticise a tragedy or a comedy. We will not just now insist that a profounder knowledge of the subject is necessitated in one case than in the other. An equality of power and acquirements is all we contend for at present.

WHILE surveying one of the divisions of a very unpleasant place, called Malebolge, the great Dante perceived an old political adversary in an odd predicament. A snake flew at the nape of this unfortunate person's neck, bored a hole therein; and lo! and behold! Dante could not so soon say "Jack Robinson" (Nè O sì tosto mai nè I sì scrisse), as the bitten party was reduced to ashes before his eyes. However, the ashes, which were scattered about the ground, were speedily gathered together again, and Vanno Fucci, of Pistoja (the party in question), was so completely restored, that he made a tolerably long speech with a view to offend Dante, as a great member of the White faction.

This strange spectacle suggested to the mind of the illustrious Florentine the very common-place image of the Phoenix, but if we had been favoured with the same agreeable sight we should have taken the quickly broken and quickly mended man of Pistoja for a symbol of the Lyceum Theatre. Nor do we allude to the conflagration of the old house that had its *façade* in the Strand, and the erection in its place of the new house that thrusts its portico into Wellington-street. Managerial not physical dissolution would have been the subject of our meditation, which would not have gone back beyond the chronicles of the new house. We should have thought of the many enterprises that had been commenced in that fair edifice, of the speed with which they

proved abortive, of the rapidity with which activity brought to a stand-still has been succeeded by activity renewed.

First of all in order of time is the respectable operatic monarchy of the late Mr. S. Arnold, with the *Nourjahad* of Edward Loder, and the *Mountain Sylph* of John Barnett. The entertainments consist of opera, drama and farce; and opera, drama and farce are all strongly cast—everything, in fact, looks very strong and substantial. Suddenly Mr. Packer's *Sadak and Kalasrade* fixes itself on the establishment like the snake on the neck of Vanni Fucci ;—a dynasty crumbles away, a throne is vacant. Then comes a series of events more complicated than a history of South American revolutions. Actors form themselves into republics, sometimes of the aristocratic, sometimes of the democratic kind. Sometimes wisdom is in the council, and talent on the stage ; sometimes talent is on the stage without wisdom in the council; sometimes the stage is unencumbered by talent as the council by wisdom. Sismondi's "History of the Italian Republics" fills sixteen very respectable octavo volumes, but he who writes a history of the Lyceum Republics will beat Sismondi's hollow in point of bulk if not in point of interest. Occasionally the phantasmagoric series of commonwealths is varied by the appearance of a very brief monarchy or dictatorship. Mr. Balfé looks as though he would achieve that great desideratum—the establishment of an English Opera-house, and *Keolanthe* will still be remembered as a monument of his efforts. Poor George Stevens, too, has his little Elizabethan freaks, and drops more money than he ever picks up again, by bringing out, at his own expense, his cumbersome *Martinuzzi*. At last the long line of short or weak governments, which is growing as tedious as the Tchenkue, or "period of petty kings," that lasted in China from 770 to 320 B.C.—this long line, we say, is brought to a close by the Keeleys, and in 1844 a good sound monarchy with a proper company is once more established. No undertaking could be more promising. At the moment when the Keeleys step upon the throne, a number of young wits are just beginning to put forth their energies. The Lyceum is the dramatic birth-place of Tom Taylor and Shirley Brookes, while Albert Smith and Charles Kenney became something like permanent dramatists under the genial influence of the new rule. Creditable and profitable to the end was the management of the Keeleys. But why did it come to an end ? This time the destructive snake took the form of an increased demand for something—we forget whether it referred to the rent, or to the gas, or to somebody's salary ;—at all events the Keeleys left the spot with money in their pockets, and there was the crumbling away of another dynasty. When again united the ashes take an exceedingly vivacious form and picturesque shape. The sparkling vision of the Vestris-Mathews government adorned by the genius of Beverley is before our eyes. But sparkle as it may, this government does not look very solid. Pieces come out at a moment's notice, and with scarcely a day's preparation ; reports of legal proceedings interweave themselves with reports theatrical, and though the vivacious manager is the delight of everybody who looks at him, a large multitude is not to be assembled save by the incessant production of fairy spectacles, which at last pall upon the appetite.

Of Mr. Mitchell's "Opera-buffa," of the temporary occupation of the Lyceum by French or Italian companies, we take no notice, since, to the speculator in these cases, the theatre was merely a house that happened to be vacant for the brief time they wanted them, and they no more regarded the Lyceum as a permanent residence than a man mistakes

a room in an inn for his proper house. The last dissolved government was that of Mr. Charles Dillon, which also looked showy in its day, but which also came in for the serpent's bite. As for Mr. George Webster's reign, its termination could scarcely be called the fall of a dynasty, as the functions of government, after a pause not worth mentioning, were undertaken by Mr. Falconer, whose comedy, *Extremes*, has again rendered the theatre an important establishment.

As far as we ourselves are concerned, Dante did not more heartily detest Filippo Argenti than we abominate the school to which Mr. Falconer's comedy belongs. But we admit that in the vigour of his writing he has shown himself superior to his school, and, what is more, we grant that the school itself finds many admirers amongst existing playgoers. Let us hope, while we congratulate Mr. Falconer on his well-merited success, that he has founded something like a Lyceum government, that will not fall to pieces at the first little nibble of adversity.

A GERMAN CRITIC IN LONDON.*

THE fifth and last concert was far more interesting and satisfactory than the fourth. The orchestral pieces, the overtures to *Medea*, to *Ruy Blas*, and to *Oberon*, and the *Sinfonia Eroica* were really very well executed, and, above all, the names of Miss Arabella Goddard and Joachim gave especial lustre to the programme. These had both brought to light from the obscure stores of an earlier epoch the material for the display of their genius. [Fashion no doubt had its share in the resuscitation ; but this is a good fashion, if not carried too far.] Bach's sonata, No. 5, with the splendid fugue for the violin alone, and Dussek's concerto, No. 6, in G minor, rose from oblivion as dazzling novelties before the eyes of the astonished public. Joachim's truly marvellous rendering of Old Bach's contrapuntal masterpiece excited the most extraordinary demonstrations of applause, although it cannot be denied that the majestic tones produced by this hero of the strings, did not make us quite overlook the desolate position of a single violin in a large hall. In the second part he played the Romanza in F, with orchestral accompaniment by Beethoven.

Dussek's concerto for the piano was even less known than Bach's sonata for the violin. We all heard it for the first time, and very few of us could either have seen it or played it. It is a genuine concerto of its kind, with the first movement broadly designed and brilliantly worked out. The slow movement in E flat is melodious, though it displays no extraordinary invention. But the finale—a rondo in G minor, like the first movement—is a magnificent piece composed in that characteristic, we may say genial style that distinguishes the bravuras of Dussek. The execution of this concerto is the reverse of easy ; but Miss Goddard is no longer conscious of difficulties on her instrument. She is, moreover, an artist in the true sense of the word, and the extraordinary success which she has recently achieved in England is not to be ascribed to the patriotism of her countrymen. Even the severest critics among the modern Germans have awarded to her the palm among all the lady pianists of the present day, not even excepting Mad. Schumann and Mad. Szarvary-Clauss.

What is effected by this young lady by dint of industry and perseverance, combined with genial intelligence and technical genius, is really incredible.

* From a series of letters under the head of "The London Musical Season" in the *Niederrheinische Musik Zeitung*.

She gave the first series of *soirées* at her own residence; for the second she selected Willis's Rooms, which on each occasion were filled with an audience comprising every one who could lay claim to any rank in the domain of music. Most justly were these *soirées* termed "classical." Neither the wishes of titled ladies, nor the homage of worshippers, can lure this, in every respect, gifted lady from the true path of art; she never stoops to the mere amusement of her hearers. Look over her programmes, and you will be astonished when I tell you that all this has been mastered by a girl in the bloom of youth. Then you will find Hummel's grand sonata in D major (Op. 106), the last that he composed for the piano solo; Beethoven's sonatas in A major (Op. 101), and B flat major (Op. 106); Wölff's sonata, *Non Plus Ultra*, in F, and Dussek's sonata, *Plus Ultra*, in A flat (Op. 71), both in one evening; C. M. von Weber's sonata in E minor (Op. 70); S. Bach's *Fuga scherzando*, fugue in A minor, fugue in G major, for the "Well-tempered Harpsichord;" Scarlatti's fugue in G minor; Mozart's sonata in E flat and B flat, with violin (M. Sainton); Mendelssohn's quartets in F minor and B minor; a duet with violoncello and the fugue in D major from the "Charakter-stücke," for the pianoforte, by the same composers. Add to these several others, as, for instance, Beethoven's concerto in E flat major, Dussek's concerto already mentioned, &c., and you will form some notion of Miss Goddard's studies. Those who have heard her performance of Beethoven's Op. 106 and Dussek's *Plus Ultra* can declare that there is no flattery in the title "Queen of the pianoforte." The terribly long and almost impracticable sonata (Op. 106) she first played before the public in 1853, when she was scarcely 17 years of age, and even then excited admiration. In the course of the last two seasons she has played it three times, and now, in her 22nd year, she so completely rules the spirit of the masters of all schools, that she can evoke it for our benefit from the greatest and most difficult of their works.

CRYSTAL PALACE.—The directors have engaged Madlle. Piccolomini to sing at a concert given the day previous to her departure for America. Madlle. Piccolomini sails on Saturday, the 29th instant, so that she will make her appearance at the Crystal Palace on Friday, the 28th. A concert is announced to take place this day on behalf of the funds of the Early Closing Association, in which Madame Clara Novello and Miss Ransford are engaged to sing.

PARIS.—Madame Marie Cabel has created a great sensation at the Opéra-Comique by her performance of Carlo in Auber's *Part du Diable*, revived expressly for her. It is in contemplation to reproduce *Lestocq*, certainly one of Auber's finest works.—At the Grand-Opéra Madame Borghi-Mamo has appeared for the first time as Catharina in the *Reine de Chypre* with success.—M. Calzado has issued his prospectus for the ensuing campaign at the Italienne. The revivals and new operas promised are *Macbeth*, by Verdi; *Anna Bolena*, *I Martiri* and *Roberto Devereux*, by Donizetti; *Il Giuramento*, by Mercadante, and *Zelmira*, by Rossini. The last alone will be worth all the rest. Madame Frezzolini has arrived in Paris from London, and Mr. Vincent Wallace is also in the capital of the Beaux-Arts, which was never so dull as at present, nor had less to say for itself. We are all searching the journals for news, and cannot even light upon a stale joke of Rossini's to amuse the reader.

G. V. BROOKE.—Mr. G. V. Brooke and party arrived last evening, by the "Tasmania," having fulfilled a successful engagement at Hobart Town. The Prince of Wales Theatre will, we understand, be opened by him on Monday week.—*Sydney Herald*, July 10.

DRURY LANE THEATRE.

THE Pyne and Harrison company has every reason to be gratified with its success in its new operatic home. The triumphant reception of the *Rose of Castille* at the Lyceum on its first production last autumn, was fully equalled by that accorded to it last Monday at Drury Lane. A more brilliant audience we have seldom seen at this period of the year in the old theatre. The appearance of the dress-boxes and stalls would almost lead to the belief that everybody was not out of London, and that some of the "light and heavy swells" of the season were really in town, allured from the breezy sea-side, or the smelling clover, where partridges may be said to hove, by the combined attractions of Balfe's music and Miss Louisa Pyne's and Mr. W. Harrison's singing. The "gods," too, mustered in strong force, and the denizens of the pit, the "would-be critics and won't-be gentlemen," vied with the supernals and the "upper ten" in numbers.

Of the *Rose of Castille*, having already said so much upon so many former occasions, we do not feel ourselves called upon to say one word; nor is there anything new to preach to our readers about the performance, which, as regards the principals, more particularly in the hands of Miss Louisa Pyne and Mr. W. Harrison, betokened the excellence of last year; while the band, under the able direction of Mr. Alfred Mellon, exhibited all its former efficiency and strength. Nor must the chorus be forgotten, which, culled from the choir of the Royal Italian Opera, were fully equal to all the demands made on their musical skill by Balfe's music.

The opera was received throughout with thunders of applause, and the encores were so numerous that they almost equalled the volley of bouquets thrown, at the fall of the curtain, at Miss Louisa Pyne and Mr. W. Harrison—the Drury Lane audience naturally concluding that, although the fashion of flinging bundles of flowers at a male vocalist, however high he may sing, displays, to say the least of it, bad taste, they have as good a right to shower honours in this manner on their tenor, as Mr. Lumley's aristocratic assemblies on theirs. Is not Mr. Harrison as worthy of posies at Drury Lane as Signor Giuglini at Her Majesty's Theatre? For our own parts we had rather pelt oranges or rotten eggs at the best tenor in the world, than fling flowers at him under any circumstances. And so Mr. Harrison must have felt on Monday night, since he did all he could to force the multitudinous presents on Miss Louisa Pyne—an act, of course, which brought down an extra floral shower.

After the opera, the national anthem was sung, our umquahile friend and old favourite of the public, Miss Rainforth, taking the solos. The return to the stage of this talented vocalist should have been distinctly alluded to in the prospectus.

The performances concluded with a *ballet divertissement*, in which, as we anticipated last week, Mdlles. Morlacchi, Pasquale, and Michelet exhibited their talents and graces to considerable advantage. Nevertheless, we are not of the belief that Drury Lane Theatre is the legitimate home of the ballet.

The success achieved by the *Rose of Castille* has completely set aside all idea of producing *Martha* at present.

CARMARTHEN.—We have much pleasure in recording the following resolution passed at a meeting of the Kington Board of Guardians, held for the purpose of accepting the resignation of the Rev. John Brinley Richards, chaplain to the Union, who has been appointed to the curacy of Wareham, Dorsetshire. Mr. Richards is the third son of the late Mr. H. Richards, organist of this town, and brother of Brinley Richards, Esq., of London, the accomplished pianist and composer:—

"RESOLVED,—That the Board receive, with unfeigned regret, the resignation of the Rev. J. B. Richards as chaplain to the Union House, and the guardians feel it their duty to express their entire satisfaction, not only with the way in which he discharged his ministerial duties, but also with the affectionate and zealous manner in which he imparted spiritual instruction, and afforded religious consolation to the sick and dying inmates of this house.—BEN. BODENHAM, Clerk."—*Carmarthen Journal*.

OPENING OF THE NEW ORGAN AT THE FREE-TRADE HALL, MANCHESTER.

We have already presented our readers with a correct description of the new organ erected by Messrs. Kirtland and Jardine in the Free-trade Hall. A very numerous audience, including many persons from considerable distances, attended the morning performance on Tuesday.

Mr. Best, the eminent organist of the St. George's Hall, Liverpool, was warmly welcomed on his appearance upon the orchestra, and commenced his performances with a pastoreale, by Bach, at the close introducing one of those pedal fugues by the same composer which are the great delight of connoisseurs of the organ. This Mr. Best played with that matchless perfection for which he is celebrated, the pedal passages telling out in a manner which proved that the builders had preserved a proper balance of power between this portion of the organ and the manuals. There was quite sufficient weight, and the tone was ponderous without being overbearing. The overture to the *Last Judgment*, by Spohr, we never heard so well played on the organ; all the points were capitally brought out, and the tremulous effect in the soft passages was most effectively introduced. Mr. Best introduced the clarinet stop in the adagio of Mendelssohn's sonata in C minor, and brought in the tubas near the close with fine effect. But it was in his own "Air with variations" that he displayed to the general audience most strikingly his unrivalled powers of execution. The variation in which he plays rapid passages, as a solo on the pedals, was interrupted by applause which would not be restrained till the close of the piece, which was a signal for renewed demonstrations, which resulted in so unmistakeable an encore that Mr. Best was compelled to return; when, instead of repeating his own composition, he gave the march in the *Prophet*, by Meyerbeer, in a manner which displayed the power of the instrument to great advantage. The organ will be a great acquisition to the Hall, and will prove of the greatest possible service in concerts generally, as it is capable of many orchestral effects, but more particularly in those of sacred music, whether as the sole means of accompaniment, or as used in conjunction with the orchestra. Of course, Mr. Best was the lion of the morning, but the intervals between the organ pieces were well filled up by Miss Armstrong and Mr. Mann. Miss Armstrong pleased us most in Haydn's "Now the dancing sunbeams play," and in the Scotch song, "John Anderson, my Jo," which she rendered very beautifully. Mr. Mann also showed that he possesses good knowledge of his art, and the cold from which he was suffering did not prevent him from making it evident that he has a pleasing voice. In the duets, the voices of both the vocalists blended harmoniously; and altogether the vocal selection was very favourably received. We believe that on this occasion Mr. George Freemantle came forward, for the first time, as pianoforte accompanist at the Free-trade Hall, and we are happy to record that he occupied the post in that efficient manner which must have been anticipated by those who are familiar with his performances at the Blind Asylum.

The evening concert was extremely well attended, and the performances were equally successful with those of the morning. Mr. Best's selection comprised one of the organ concertos by Handel, now in course of publication by Mr. Best, in which Mr. Best's dexterous use of the composition pedals may be noticed; prelude and fugue, in E, by Bach; air with variations, by Mr. Hatton, in which several points of the organ were displayed; and, in answer to an encore, the air, with variations, which Mr. Best played so finely in the morning; and, lastly, Handel's splendid chorus, "Fixed on his everlasting seat," in which the rolling bass passages played on the pedals were remarkably telling. The vocalists were Mrs. Sunderland, Miss Newbound, and Mr. Mann. The first piece, the beautiful trio "Ti Prego," was charmingly sung, and without going into further particulars, we may say that the whole selection was exceedingly satisfactory. However, we may mention that Mrs. Sunderland was eminently successful in Haydn's exquisite canzonet, "My mother bids me bind my hair," and in "Eve's Lamentation," by King; that Miss Newbound was much applauded in the favourite song by

Land, "When sorrow sleepeth, wake it not;" and that Mr. Mann was encored in a song by Halt. (?) Mr. Walker ably accompanied on the pianoforte.—*Manchester Times*.

WATERFORD.—Messrs. Hill and Son, of London, have just erected a grand organ in the Roman Catholic Cathedral, the largest instrument yet erected in Ireland. On Sunday, the 29th ult., the opening took place, when Pontifical High Mass was celebrated before an immense congregation. The organist on this occasion was Mr. W. T. Best, of St. George's Hall, Liverpool, who fully displayed the great resources of the instrument. The organ contains 48 registers, including an admirably constructed *Vox Humana* and a pedal organ of 7 stops, including a 32 feet double diapason. The reed work of this instrument surpasses anything that this eminent firm has yet produced. The effect of the full organ (with four trumpet registers of 16, 8, and 4 feet) being truly magnificent. The following is a description in full of the new grand organ:—

3 Manuals and Pedal Organ.

Great Organ C C to F, 54 notes, contains:—1, Double diapason, metal, to 12 ft., G lower, 7 bourdons, 16 ft.; 2, Open diapason, metal, 8 ft.; 3, Open diapason No. 2, metal, 8 ft.; 4, Viol de gamba (German), metal, 8 ft.; 5, Stopped diapason, wood, 8 ft.; 6, Quint, metal, 6 ft.; 7, Principal, metal, 4 ft.; 8, Wald flute, wood, 4 ft.; 9, Twelfth, metal, 3 ft.; 10, Fifteenth, metal, 2 ft.; 11, Sesquialtra, 3 ranks, metal, 1½ ft.; 12, Mixture, 3 ranks, metal, 1½ ft.; 13, Positane, metal, 8 ft.; 14, Trumpet, metal, 8 ft.; 15, Clarion, metal, 4 ft.; 16, Trumpet, metal, 16 ft.

Choir Organ contains:—1, Cone gamba, metal, 8 ft.; 2, Keraulophon, tenor C, metal, 8 ft.; 3, Stopped diapason bass, stopped diapason treble, wood, 8 ft.; 4, Stopped flute, wood, 4 ft.; 5, Gemshorn principal, metal, 4 ft.; 6, Piccolo, wood, 2 ft.; 7, Cormorne, metal, 8 ft.

Swell Organ C C to F, 54 notes, contains:—1, Bourdon bass and double diapason, wood and metal, 16 ft.; 2, Open diapason, wood and metal, 8 ft.; 3, Dulciana to tenor C, metal, 8 ft.; 4, Stopped diapason, bass and treble, wood, 8 ft.; 5, Principal, metal, 4 ft.; 6, Suabe flute to tenor C, wood, 4 ft.; 7, Twelfth, metal, 3 ft.; 8, Fifteenth, metal, 2 ft.; 9, Sesquialtra, 3 ranks, metal, 1½ ft.; 10, Cornopean, metal, 8 ft.; 11, Oboe, metal, 8 ft.; 12, Clarion, metal, 4 ft.; 13, Vox humana, tenor C, metal, ft. tone, 16 ft.

Pedal Organ CCC to F, 30 Notes, contains:—1, Open diapason (wood), 16 ft.; 2, Violone (wood), 16 ft.; 3, Principal, (metal), 8 ft.; 4, Fifteenth (metal), 4 ft.; 5, Sesquialtra 3 ranks (metal), 3 ft.; 6, Trombone, (wood), 16 ft.; 7, Contra Bourdon, 32 ft. Stops: Great organ, 16; Choir, 7; Swell, 13; Pedal, 7; Couplers, 5; Total, 48. Pipes: Great organ, 979; Choir, 354; Swell, 774; Pedal, 210; Total, 2317.

Couplers:—1, Swell to great; 2, Pedal to great; 3, Pedal to swell; 4, Pedal to choir; 5, Choir to Swell; Three Composition pedals to great organ to act also on pedal stops; Three Composition pedals to swell organ; a tremulant for swell organ; a separate bellows for pedal organ; a deal-case of good design painted or stained with gilt front pipes; a pneumatic action to great organ to act also on coupler, so as to render the touch perfectly light; the whole of the mechanism, material, and voicing, to be of the very best description, and the work to be of the highest class.

THE LEEDS MUSICAL FESTIVAL.—Financially, as well as musically, our Festival is a great success. The receipts amount to nearly £7,500, and the expenses will not exceed £6,000. Thus there will be a very handsome surplus for the funds of the Infirmary, and a further addition will be made from the proceeds of a *cheap concert given in the Hall, and a grand ball in the same magnificent room*. It is greatly to the credit of the principal performers at this Festival that they have given very liberally towards the funds of the same excellent charity, having contributed in the aggregate, out of the money paid for their services, £150. The returns of the number of persons present at the performances are as follows:—Wednesday morning, 1,800; Thursday morning, between 1,800 and 1,900; Thursday evening, 2,000; Friday morning, 1,700; Friday evening, 2,000.

A VILE JOKE—(Very properly rejected by *Mr. Punch*).—The operatic performances at Drury Lane may be entitled the dessert of the musical season, in which the public are invited to taste several *Pines* and *A Melon*.

CATASTROPHE AT THE SURREY MUSIC HALL, SHEFFIELD.

A CALAMITY of the most fearful character, and attended with serious loss of life, occurred on Monday night at the Surrey Music Hall, Sheffield, an immense building capable of accommodating four thousand persons, and in which a variety of amusements were being carried on at the same time. A great crowd had assembled, and the entertainments were in full progress, when suddenly a report, as if from a pistol, was heard in the gallery, and the audience were filled with alarm. The proprietor, Mr. Youdan, however, instantly came on the platform, and after awhile succeeded in persuading the people to keep their seats, assuring them that no danger whatsoever was to be apprehended. A few minutes, notwithstanding, had hardly elapsed, when three or four men simultaneously rose in the gallery and cried aloud, "The place is on fire." A fearful scene then ensued. The audience, principally composed of young persons, frantically rushed to the various outlets of the building, while many jumped over the gallery front into the pit. All escaped safe from the pit, boxes, and upper gallery. In rushing from the lower gallery, one young man fell; others fell over him, and the staircase was blocked up. Three young men and one young woman were taken up dead, and two others were severely injured. Another man was killed by jumping out of a window. In the fright women were seen dropping children into the street, and jumping after them.

The cause of the accident, up to the present moment, is involved in mystery. At first it was supposed that a pistol had been fired in the gallery, and under this impression Mr. Youdan, when he came forward to allay the fears of the multitude, offered a reward of £5 for the perpetrator. The announcement that a pistol had been fired, and was the act of some scoundrel to create alarm, helped in some measure to restore quiet, and the people sat down apparently with the intention of devoting themselves to the business of the evening. They were not allowed to remain long undisturbed. On a sudden, from that part of the gallery whence the report issued, three men sprang forward to the front and simultaneously called out, "Fire! the place is on fire!" The effect on the audience was as if a thunderbolt had fallen amongst them. Screams and cries proceeded from all parts of the hall, order was at an end, and persons were seen leaping over the front of the gallery into the pit and on to the stage. Mr. Youdan ran at once to the steps leading from the gallery to the street, in order to stop the rush, and, if possible, restore confidence. He was not a little surprised to find a woman's mantle on fire. This had evidently been thrown on the steps only an instant before, and Mr. Youdan quickly trampled out the fire. All Mr. Youdan's efforts, however, to restore confidence failed, and he was pressed aside by the panic-stricken crowd. The professionals were alarmed at the presence of a large number of frantic persons running about the stage in search of a place to make their exit. A window was at last found, and the people dashed through it head foremost. Others in the top gallery made their way by getting over the front of the gallery, and descending by the pillars into the lower part of the building. The confusion and disorder, shouting and screaming, were frightful to hear, and beyond the power of describing. The crush was tremendous, and the wonder is that more accidents did not occur, and that more lives were not lost. Numbers were injured, more or less, by the compression, and others were thrown down and trampled under foot. Not until the place had become almost empty was the extent of the catastrophe known.

The coroner's inquest upon the five sufferers was opened on Tuesday evening, before Mr. Badger, coroner. From the evidence of William Henry Greaves, aged 19, it appeared that an explosion had taken place consequent on his striking a lucifer match to light a cigar. Another boy confirmed this statement, and both declared that previous to the explosion a strong smell of gas was perceptible. Here was a new light apparently thrown on the catastrophe, and the inquiry was adjourned until next Thursday, the jury directing that a close investigation

should take place regarding the escape of the gas, in order to ascertain whether the evidence of Greaves and his companion was correct. A strict examination by competent persons on Wednesday of the pipes in the neighbourhood of the place where the report was heard, showed beyond a doubt that there had been no escape of gas, and that consequently no explosion could have taken place. It remains therefore to be seen whether the two boys were framing a story, and for what purpose it was framed. It is scarcely credible that a conspiracy so horrible could have been devised. That it is a conspiracy, however, seems clear.

At the next inquiry it is to be hoped that some light may be thrown on the mystery, and that the perpetrators of so diabolical a crime may not escape detection.

ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC PLACES OF AMUSEMENT.

(From *The Times*.)

HERE is another "Surrey Music Hall" catastrophe. It is going the round of the provinces, and this time it has been reproduced, with the usual destruction of life, at Sheffield. The building was not even finished, and if there had been any wish to profit by the experience of our own "Surrey," there must have been the opportunity; but of all people in the world English architects are about the last to profit by experience. It certainly seems so in this instance. The two galleries are approached by winding stairs, the exact construction of which does not appear. They are divided, we are told by the local journal, into successive flights of half-a-dozen steps, and this is considered a provision against the consequences of excessive pressure. The narrative of the disaster, however, shows that two young women could precipitate themselves, or be precipitated, far enough down the stairs to be killed on the spot; two young men could be killed in the struggle on the stairs, and another young man could find his chance of ordinary egress so bad that he preferred throwing himself from a window, and was killed by the fall. Considering that the place held 3,000, of whom nearly half might be in the galleries, and considering, too, that it took a full hour to clear the building, the wonder is the deaths were so few. Indeed, we are bound to say that we have lately had no such catastrophe as that where eighteen persons perished at the Adelphi about the beginning of this century, and a still greater number at an execution, not to speak of the awful and ominous loss of life at the marriage of Louis XVI. Horrible as it may seem, an utterly inadequate egress imposes limits to such a disaster. As railway directors tell us that the safest course in the end is to lock up the passengers in their carriages and deny them means of giving alarm, so, perhaps, the safest course would be to put a door to every staircase in a theatre, to lock it at the beginning of the performance, to forbid exit under any circumstances whatever, and then, perhaps, as a necessary supplement to these precautions, cage in the galleries as we have done the top of the monument and the Duke of York's column. In that case it might happen that once in five hundred years a whole audience would be burnt alive; but in the meantime we should not witness the minor calamity of half-a-dozen crushed in a staircase. It may, however, be worth considering, and the guardians of the public weal are certainly bound to consider, whether all is done that can be done to avert such horrors, whether in the grossordetail. It may not be easy to secure us altogether against the results of so mad and uncontrollable a thing as a panic, but if we cannot say what is the very best arrangements for egress from a crowded theatre, we can at least be sure that certain arrangements are insufficient and bad. The licensing magistrates, or the district surveyor where a building Act is in operation, ought to have the power to prevent any theatre or public hall from being opened till it had satisfied them in this respect.

So far from being at all surprised at the frequency of these disasters, our wonder is there are not more, and that they are not more destructive. Only think of the labyrinth of the narrow winding passages and stairs through which the greater part of the immense audiences of Exeter Hall have to accomplish their

exit. They are particularly requested not to rise before the conclusion of the performances, but from that conclusion it takes a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes to get into the Strand. The first hundred would block up the exit, and the remaining three thousand would not be burnt alive, for we believe the building to be very safe from that, but they would be very uncomfortable for half-an-hour, and would probably kill at least a hundred of each other. The smaller theatres are nearly as bad. The new Italian Opera in Covent Garden appears to be an immense improvement on its predecessors, the corridors and staircases being both spacious and fire-proof. In that case there was warning. It was observed, at the destruction of the old theatre, that had the fire broken out any hour before midnight, instead of several hours after, when there remained only two or three hundreds out of as many thousands, we should have had not only such a disaster as that at Sheffield, but something like a real holocaust, so rapid was the progress of the flames. People are always told to sit still. Of course, it is their best course; at least, better than flinging themselves on a mass of people tumbling down a staircase; but the fact of such a theatre as old Covent Garden being burnt down in an hour does not encourage one to "sit still," when the fire is actually in progress. The old Olympic was a crazy fabric, chiefly composed of old ships' timbers. At seven o'clock carriages were still putting down company; at nine you could have carried in the palm of your hand, so we were told, all that remained of the inner theatre. Now, it is not everybody who can remember the exact materials or construction of an edifice burning over his head, or who can calculate to a nicety how long the flames will be reaching him, or how many degrees of Fahrenheit his constitution can bear.

Foreign architects have often observed that in our public buildings and larger private mansions, the staircase appears to have been an after-thought. In the country of Vitruvius and Palladio, and all over the Continent, the tradition of the open central atrium seems to have been kept up, so as to secure a large amount of hall and passage, and to procure breadth and effect for the staircase. An ordinary Italian hotel will often have a grander flight of stairs right to the top story than is to be found in the mansion of an English nobleman. The amphitheatres, however, are the very cases in point, and any one who has seen and inspected the Coliseum will readily believe that its 80,000 occupants could easily get safe to the street in five minutes. Round and under the seats it is all passages and stairs, and people, once under its massive archways, would feel themselves safe from every possible conflagration. That was the general plan of the amphitheatre to be found in every Roman town of any size. It is the best model for the modern theatre, whether in its open design or in its fire-proof material. Just now there appears to be a very laudable passion for building large rooms for public assemblages, such as that which the Queen opened the other day at Leeds, St. George's Hall at Liverpool, and a dozen others which have lately been described in our columns. As others are likely to be built, and as economy may suggest galleries, or even raise the hall a whole story from the ground, we beg to insist on the use of ample and easy stairs. The warning is not a bit too soon. We have not yet seen the worst catastrophe we are doomed to see of this kind. It would be invidious to single out a room, or a theatre, but when we see one ordinary doorway, not wider than the door of a bedchamber, the only aperture left to several hundred occupiers of stalls in the pit of a theatre, or the area of a public room, it has occurred to us to reflect, to little purpose, "What should we do in case of a fire?" That single door is generally in a corner, at the foot of several steps, and attainable only by crossing several benches, or climbing over chairs, which, under the supposed circumstances, would be full of people in the utmost terror and confusion. In these cases a strong man, with presence of mind, might shift for himself; but what if he had women and children with him? Our assurance-offices will tell us a theatre is liable to take fire, and if it does it is not often that the great cistern is full of water, or the key can be found, or the water is of any use. Nor would it follow, even if the fire should eventually be extinguished, that the audience had not been

burnt in the meantime. As guardians of the public, we are justified in calling for more attention to this subject, even if it should cost some of that space and that money which speculators would rather spend in increasing the seats or the stage. Time will show whether the caution is superfluous. Suppose, for example, that the Music Hall at Sheffield had been really on fire, and that the fire, spreading over head, had not been found so easy to be extinguished. What would have been the fate of the 3,000 people under that burning shower? It took an hour to clear the Hall, but would not half-an-hour, or even a quarter, have settled the fate of all who had not escaped?

MR. T. H. TOMLINSON'S SOIRÉE MUSICALE—(From a North London Correspondent).—This *soirée* took place (by kind permission) at the residence of R. Dawes, Esq., Abbey-road, St. John's wood. The concert commenced with the overture to *L'Italiana in Algeri*, as a duet for pianoforte (four hands) and flute, exceedingly well performed by Mr. T. H. Tomlinson, Master Dawes, and Mr. Dawes, after which "The Queen's letter" was sung with spirit and feeling by Mr. Robinson. The "event" of the evening, however, was the performance of Griffin's first concerto by Miss Dawes, whom we cannot praise too highly. Her playing was most surprising, taking into consideration that the young lady is but ten years of age. The first movement of the concerto was played with great brilliancy; the slow movement (which contains the air "The blue bells of Scotland") with an amount of expression that evidently pleased the audience, and the *più moto* with remarkable precision, especially those passages requiring frequent crossing of the hands. The piano parts of the *rondo* were played with such lightness of touch, and the *forte* with so much power, that the audience were quite delighted. At the end of the concerto the young pianist was saluted with a storm of applause. Miss Dawes was then presented by Mr. Tomlinson with a handsome silver medal, on one side of which was engraved a wreath of frosted flowers (the rose, shamrock, and thistle) encircling the lyre of Apollo, resting on a music-book. On the reverse was the inscription: "Presented by Mr. T. H. Tomlinson to Miss Ellen Jane Dawes, as a mark of esteem for her musical talent in playing Griffin's first concerto at the age of Ten Years." The programme contained several other instrumental and vocal pieces, among which were "What shall my song be to-night?" (sung by a lady); Reichardt's popular *lied*, "Thou art so near, and yet so far;" Balfe's new song, "I'm not in love, remember" (the two latter capitally sung by Mr. Tomlinson); and Nicholson's *fantasia* on "Oh Nanny wilt thou gang wi' me?" for flute and piano, played by Mr. Dawes and Mr. Tomlinson, in which the tone and execution of Mr. Dawes were heard to great advantage. The concert concluded with Mr. Hatton's popular song, "The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe."

LEICESTER.—Mr. H. Nicholson's first grand concert for the present season took place on Tuesday evening, for which the services of Madlle. Piccolomini, Signor Rossi, Vialetti, and Giuglini, with Signor Arditì as conductor, were secured. A very fashionable audience filled the spacious music-hall, and the concert gave entire satisfaction to all present, Madlle. Piccolomini achieving an immense success in all her songs.

LEEDS—PEOPLE'S FESTIVAL CONCERT—(From a Correspondent).—The Festival Committee most wisely determined, though late in the week, to let the "people" of Leeds hear on the Saturday night some of the music which had delighted the more aristocratic assemblies earlier in the week, and to see that noble hall which has so charmed all who are able to appreciate the grand and the beautiful. Professor Bennett conducted a solo and chorus from his *May Queen*; Mr. and Madame Weiss, Mrs. Sunderland, Miss Helena Walker (the young and rising Yorkshire soprano), Miss Cropland, Mr. Wilby Cooper, Mr. Hinchcliffe, the Festival chorus (Mr. Burton, conductor), and Messrs. Henry Smart and William Spark as organists, all contributed to interpret a programme of great variety and interest to the delight of some 3,500 people who crowded the hall in every part, and were enthusiastic with everybody and everything during the whole night. We hope to hear of many more such "people's" nights, for Leeds has, indeed, the material now to give some

excellent concerts in one of the finest halls in Europe, and, we believe, with perfect success. The receipts, including Saturday night's concert, amount to £7,855 4s., and donations have been received from the following: Dr. W. S. Bennett, £20; Miss Arabella Goddard, £20; Mr. and Madame Weiss, £10 10s.; Mr. Sims Reeves, £10; Miss Dolby, £10; Mrs. Sunderland, £5 5s.; Mr. Wilbey Cooper, £5 5s.; Mr. Winn, £5 5s.; Mrs. Calverley, £10. It is calculated that £6,000 will cover all expenses, so that about £2,000 will be given to the Infirmary.

HENRI HEINE ABOUT MUSIC AND MUSICIANS.

(Translated for *Dwight's Journal of Music*.)

PARIS, MAY 1, 1844.

WHILE the Academy of Music has so sadly languished, and the Italians have dragged through their season quite as mournfully, the third lyric theatre, the Opéra-Comique, has risen to its most joyous height. Here one success has gone beyond another, and the money-box has had always a good ring. Yes, there has even been more gold than laurels reaped, which certainly was no misfortune for the Direction. The texts of the new operas, that have been given, were all of them by Scribe, the man who uttered once the great saying: "Gold is a chimera!" and who yet continually runs after this chimera. He is the man of money, of the ringing realism, who never mounts into a romantic, barren cloud-world, and who clings fast to the terrestrial reality of the marriage of reason, of industrial citizenship, and of the *tantième*. An immense success crowns Scribe's new opera, *La Sirène*, to which Auber has written the music. Author and composer are entirely suited to each other: they have the finest sense for what is interesting; they know how to entertain us agreeably: they dazzle and ecstasy us, indeed, by the brilliant facettes of their wit; they possess a certain filagree talent for putting together the most charming trifles, and one forgets in them that there is such a thing as poetry. They are a sort of *Art-lorettes*, who laugh away all the ghost stories of the past from our memory, and with their coquettish toyings, as with peacock's fans, brush the buzzing thoughts of the future, the invisible flies, away from us. To this harmless amorous tribe belongs also Adam, who, with his *Cagliostro*, has reaped likewise very easy laurels in the Opéra-Comique. Adam is an amiable, agreeable phenomenon, and his is a talent yet capable of great development. Thomas, too, deserves an honourable mention; his operetta *Mina* has had much success.

But all these triumphs have been surpassed by the popularity of "The Deserter," an old opera by Monsigny, which the Opéra-Comique has drawn forth from the portfolio of oblivion. Here is genuine French music, the liveliest grace, a harmless sweetness, a freshness as of the smell of wood-flowers, the truth of nature, in short, poetry. Yes, the latter is not wanting, but it is a poetry without the shudder of infinity, without mysterious enchantment, without sadness, without irony, without *morbidezza*—I might almost say, an elegant rustic poetry of health. The opera of Monsigny reminded me at once of his contemporary, Greuze, the painter. I saw here bodily, as it were, the rural scenes which he had just painted, and I seemed to hear the music that belonged to them. In listening to that opera, it became quite clear to me how the plastic and the reciting arts of the same period always breathe one and the same spirit, and their master-works reveal the most intimate affinity.

I cannot conclude this report without remarking that the musical season is not yet ended, and, this year, contrary to all custom, sounds on even into May. The most important balls and concerts are given at this moment, and the polka even rivals the piano. Feet and ears are weary, yet they cannot rest. The Spring, which this time sets in so early, makes a *fiasco*; green leaves and sunshine go unnoticed. The physicians, perhaps especially the madhouse doctors, will soon gain plenty of business. In this motley tumult, in this fever of amusement, in this singing, springing whirlpool, lurk death and insanity. The hammers of the pianoforte work frightfully upon our nerves, and this great vertigo malady, the polka, gives us the *coup de grâce*.

LATER NOTICE.

To the preceding communications I append, from melancholy humour, the following leaves, which belong to the summer of 1847, and which form the last act of my musical reportership. For me, all music has from that time ceased, and I little dreamed, when I sketched the sufferings of Donizetti, that a similar and far more painful visitation was approaching me. The short Art notice reads as follows:—

Since Gustavus Adolphus, of glorious memory, no Swedish reputation has made so much noise in the world as Jenny Lind. The accounts of her which came to us from England, border on the incredible. The journals are all ringing with trumpet blasts and fanfares of triumph; we hear nothing but Pindaric hymns of praise. A friend told me of an English city where all the bells were rung upon the entrance of the Swedish nightingale; the bishop who resided there celebrated this event by a remarkable discourse. In his Anglican episcopal costume, he ascended the pulpit of the cathedral, and greeted the new comer as a saviour in woman's clothes, as a lady redeemer, who had come down from heaven to deliver our souls from sin and evil by her song; whereas the other *cantatrici* were so many female devils who would trill us into the jaws of Satan. The Italians, Grisi and Persiani, must turn as yellow as canary birds with envy and chagrin, the while our Jenny, the Swedish nightingale, flutters from one triumph to another. I say our Jenny, for in reality the Swedish nightingale does not represent exclusively the little land of Sweden, but she represents the whole Germanic stock, that of the Cimbri as well as that of the Teutons; she is also a German just as much as her dull and vegetating sisters on the Elbe and on the Neckar; she belongs to Germany, as Shakspere, too, according to Franz Horn, belongs to us, and as Spinoza likewise, in his innocent nature, can only be a German—and we with pride call Jenny Lind our own! Shout, Uckermark, for thou also hast a part in this glory! Dance, Massmann, thy fatherland's most joyous dances, for our Jenny speaks no Roman gibberish, but real, Gothic, Scandinavian, most German German, and thou mayest greet her as a countrywoman—only thou must wash thyself before thou offerest her thy German hand.

Yes, Jenny Lind is a German; the very name Lind makes one think of lindens, those green cousins of our German oaks. She has no black hair like the Italian *prima donnas*; in her blue eyes swim northern sentiment and moonlight, and in her throat sounds purest maidenhood! That is it. "Maidenhood is in her voice,"—so said all the "old spinsters" in London; all prudish ladies and pious gentlemen with upturned eyes repeated it; the still surviving *mauvaise queue* of Richardson chimed in, and all Great Britain celebrated in Jenny Lind the song of maidenhood, the maidenhood of song. We must own, this is the key to the incomprehensible riddle of the immense enthusiasm which Jenny Lind has found in England, and, between us, has known well how to profit by. She only sings, they say, in order that she may be able soon to give up worldly singing, and, provided with the necessary outfit, marry a young protestant clergyman, the pastor Swenske, who in the meantime waits for her at home in his idyllic parsonage behind Upsala, around the corner to the left. It has since been hinted that the young pastor Swenske is a myth, and that the actual betrothed of the high maiden is an old hacknied actor of the Stockholm theatre—but this is surely slander.

The chastity of feeling of this *prima donna immaculata* reveals itself most beautifully in her shyness of Paris, the modern Sodom; thus she expresses upon all occasions, to the highest edification of all the *dames patronesses* of morality beyond the channel. Jenny has most distinctly vowed never to offer her song-virginity for sale to the French public on the profane boards of the Rue Lepelletier; she has sternly refused all M. Leon Pillet's propositions. "This raw virtue startles me," the old Paulet would say. Is there any foundation in the story that the nightingale of today was once in Paris in her earlier years, and received musical instruction in the sinful Conservatoire here, like other singing birds, which since then have become loose green-finches? Or does Jenny fear that Parisian criticism, which criticises in a singer not the morals, but the voice, and holds the want of school to be the greatest sin? Be that as it may, our Jenny comes not

[SEPTEMBER 18, 1858.]

here, and will not sing the French out of their pool of iniquity. They are fallen irredeemably into eternal condemnation.

Here in the musical world of Paris all goes on in the old way. In the Academie Royale de Musique it is all the while gray, damp-cold winter, while there is May sunshine and the smell of violet without. In the vestibule stands, sad and sorrowful, the statue of the divine Rossini ; he is silent. It is to the honour of M. Leon Pillet that he erected a statue to this true genius during his lifetime. Nothing is funnier than to see the grimaces with which jealousy and envy look upon it. When Signor Spontini passes by, he always stumbles against this stone. Our great maestro Meyerbeer is much more prudent, and when he goes to the opera of an evening, he always carefully contrives to steer clear of this stone of stumbling ; he even avoids the sight of it. In the same way the Jews at Rome, even in their most hurried business walks, go always a great way round, in order not to pass that fatal triumphal arch of Titus, which was erected in commemoration of the downfall of Jerusalem. The accounts of Donizetti's condition are every day more melancholy. While his melodies are enlivening the world, while he is trilled and warbled everywhere, he sits himself, a fearful image of imbecility, in a hospital at Paris. Only on the subject of his toilet he for some time showed a childish consciousness, and every day they had to dress him carefully, in full gala style, his frock adorned with all his orders ; so he sat motionless, his hat in hand, from earliest morn till late in the evening. But that, too, has ceased ; he recognizes no one any more ; such is the fate of man!

CHARACTERS OF THE DIFFERENT KEYS.

(From *Dwight's Journal of Music.*)

MANY ingenious attempts have been made to characterize the expression of the various keys in which music is composed. They are not very satisfactory. To be sure, there are some coincidences among the witnesses. There is no mistaking the broad noon-day *natural* expression of the key of *C major*; the triumphant, martial, hallelujah character of *D major*; the pastoral serenity of *F*; the sweet, unsatisfied, vague heart-yearnings (as in the "Moonlight Sonata") of *C sharp minor*. But what contradictory reports we get of many of the keys! What very various expressions they are all susceptible of, in various ways of using them. Here a correspondent sends us a curious conceit upon the subject, translated from the eccentric German, Schubart. The musician recognises not a little truth in what he says, and finds the whole by no means uninteresting, and quite suggestive. Yet how many of his characterisations go against all one's experience! Think, for instance, of his calling *A flat major* the "sepulchral key!" when in that key are written the adagio of Beethoven's *Sonata Pathétique*, the andante and variations of *Sonata Op. 26*, &c., &c.

Christian Frederic Daniel Schubart was born in Swabia in 1739. A child of very little promise, he suddenly developed an uncommon degree of musical talent. At Nuremberg, where he was at school, his taste for art found ample food, and somewhat later he gave up the study of theology for that of music. He led, however, so dissolute a life at that time, that the habits then formed had a ruinous effect upon his whole career. He officiated as organist in various small towns successively, married, and in 1768 was appointed director of music at Ludwigsburg, where he also delivered lectures on esthetics. Here his life grew still more unbridled, in consequence of which his wife became deranged, and he was finally imprisoned for his immorality. Shortly after he was dismissed from his post and exiled, on account of a satirical poem on some influential person at court, and a parody on the liturgy. Subsequently he edited for some time a journal entitled *German Chronicle*, but in consequence of the liberal opinions expressed therein, was again thrown in prison, and remained in confinement ten years. Through the intervention of literary friends, he was at last liberated, and appointed director of music and the theatre at Stuttgart, in 1787. Here he published a volume of poems, "Ideas on the *Æsthetics of Tone-Art*" (from which we imagine the following curious compositions to be an extract), and several other similar works. So far as can be ascertained, he never stood remarkably high as a practical musician. He died in 1791.

(To be continued.)

ADVERTISEMENTS.

PIANOFORTES.—DEWRANCE'S COMPENSATING

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